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UNCLAS SANTO DOMINGO 001486

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CAR (MCISAAC), WHA/PPC (PUCETTI), G/TIP (OWEN); JUSTICE FOR OPDAT (LIPMAN)

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KCRM](#) [SMIG](#) [DR](#)

SUBJECT: ANTI-TRAFFICKING FOR DOMINICANS BY U.S. DOJ, FEB. 22-24

1. SUMMARY: On February 22-24, the Department of Justice Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development Assistance Training conducted an anti-trafficking workshop to assist Dominicans in creating an operations manual for enforcement of laws against trafficking in persons (TIP). The participants represented government agencies, two local NGOs, and the International Organization for Migration. The training emphasized the need for the necessary tools and resources to combat TIP, including effective, up-to-date legislation and vigorous, motivated law enforcement officials. Participants planned to form a working group to draft the operations manual using notes from the workshop and to look for ways to improve communication and share information among the agencies with TIP-related responsibilities. END SUMMARY.

2. The Department of Justice Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development Assistance Training (DOJ/OPDAT) conducted a workshop on operations to counter trafficking in persons (TIP) for representatives of Dominican law enforcement agencies February 22-24. The workshop was designed to guide the Dominicans in drafting an operations manual for combating TIP. It attracted working-level participants from the Attorney General's Office, National Police, Foreign Ministry, Naval Intelligence, and Migration Directorate. Also participating were local NGOs "Center for Integral Orientation and Investigation" (COIN) and "Foundation for Institution-Building and Justice" (FINJUS), as well as the International Organization for Migration. Robert Lipman of DOJ/OPDAT led. He and prosecutor Maria Aponte, FBI Special Agent Raul Bujanda, and FBI Victim Witness Specialist Roberta Lujan led a series of panels, brainstorming sessions, and discussions addressing specific steps to combat TIP. Participants shared their experience in TIP cases, identified challenges in law enforcement, and discussed ways to improve inter-agency cooperation on TIP cases.

3. Lipman and the trainers focused the participants, attention on investigative approaches that law enforcement can implement immediately, using existing personnel and the modern and comprehensive 2003 Dominican anti-TIP legislation, as well as other, more creative methods. Proposed strategies for detection included obtaining copies of visa applications from foreign consulates in the Dominican Republic and developing a list of TIP-related questions for use by airport officials. An investigative pilot project was proposed, which included immediately shutting down a handful of brothels known to be operating, by identifying probable violations of the labor and tax codes as well as violations of the anti-TIP law. The Dominicans planned to form a law enforcement working group to consider these steps and to combine their notes from the workshop into a manual for handling TIP cases, based on a structure provided by the DOJ/OPDAT team.

Comment

4. The DOJ/OPDAT workshop focused Dominican participants on practical measures that can be implemented quickly. OPDAT trainers were highly effective. Participants exhibited a strong desire to implement the lessons learned during the conference and to collaborate with one another. The proposed operations manual could help the Dominicans take a more consistent, cooperative approach to TIP cases.

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